



VILLAGE OF HARRISON HOT SPRINGS POLICY

COUNCIL	POLICY NO. 1.40
PUBLIC ALERTING SYSTEM USE	DATE ADOPTED: April 22, 2025

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for staff when accessing, maintaining, and operating the Village's public alerting system and the permitted use, roles and requirements for issuing alerts.

2. DEFINITIONS

"Advisory Alert" means an *alert* that is in response to an *emergency* that is not immediately life-threatening but that is still important to be aware of as it may pose a risk to health or property and could potentially escalate to become a *critical alert* if the situation worsens. Advisory Alerts include general notification types that may not be public safety related.

"Alert" includes *critical alerts*, *advisory alerts*, and *test alerts*, that are intended to bring public awareness to a current or imminent situation.

"Alert Authorizer" means a pre-identified personnel member who is approved to use the Public Alerting System to issue an alert when requested by an Alert Requestor.

"Alerting Authority" means an agency or organization with the designated authority to alert and warn the public when there is an impending natural or human-made disaster or threat. In BC, the *alerting authority* is generally the local authority. However, for some disasters or threats, such as those related to extreme weather or infectious diseases, the *alerting authority* may be another agency (e.g. Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fraser Health). The Village is an alerting authority.

"Alert Requestor" means pre-identified personnel who is approved to request that an Alert Authorizer send a public Alert on their department or agency's behalf.

"Critical Alert" means an alert that is in response to an Emergency that requires urgent action, is extremely severe (i.e. threatening to peoples' lives), and that there is high certainty that it will occur. When a Critical Alert is issued, people in the affected area need to be prepared to take immediate action for life safety or protection of property.

"Emergency" means the definition as provided in the Emergency and Disaster Management Act, S.B.C. 2023 c.37.

"Public Alerting System" means a software-as-a-service web-based system that can be used to rapidly warn the public of imminent or unfolding hazards to life.

"System Administrator" means the staff person who has administrator access to the Public Alerting System and is approved to request configuration/changes from the system vendor.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Village permits the use of the Public Alerting System for both emergency and non-emergency alerting.

3.1 Emergencies

- a. The Public Alerting System will be used to issue Critical Alerts for emergencies where the Village is the Alerting Authority and that require information to be rapidly communicated to the public. All of the following criteria must be met for a Critical Alert to be issued:
 - i. Urgent: responsive action should be taken immediately or soon
 - ii. Severe: the event poses an extraordinary or significant threat to life or property
 - iii. Certain: the event is likely or has been observed
 - iv. Local: the event is occurring in or will affect the Village of Harrison Hot Springs
- b. The Public Alerting System may be used to issue Advisory Alerts for emergency situations that do not meet the criteria for a Critical Alert, or where the Village is not the Alerting Authority but is implementing response actions that provide support to the public.
- c. The Public Alerting System is not a replacement for existing methods of notifying the public of Emergency situations, such as social media and / or media advisories.

3.2 Non-Emergencies

- a. The Public Alerting system may be used for non-Emergency public communications, upon request and approval.
- b. The Public Alerting System is not to be used for non-emergency communication within the same time frame and area as current / active emergency alerts.

4. ALERT REQUESTORS AND ALERT AUTHORIZERS

- a. The Chief Administrative Officer will approve Alert Requestors and Alert Authorizers.
- b. The Chief Administrative Officer or designate will review and confirm the Alert Authorizers and Alert Administrators annually.
- c. The System Administrator will ensure that Alert Requestors have received appropriate orientation for the Public Alerting System.
- d. A list of approved Alert Authorizers and Alert Administrators will be maintained by the Village.

5. SYSTEM ACCESS

- a. The System Administrator must adhere to the third-party Public Alerting System's user agreement, terms, and conditions.
- b. Alert Administrators are permitted to access the Public Alerting System only for the purposes of training and issuing Alerts in accordance with this policy.

6. ISSUING ALERTS

- a. Alert Requestors will identify and prioritize response actions to address the Emergency and will determine when a situation requires an Alert to be sent.
- b. An Alert Authorizer will only issue an Alert when requested by an Alert Requestor.
- c. Alert Requestors and Administrators must document in writing decisions and actions taken in relation to issuing an Alert.
- d. The Village may enter into written agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions to allow the Village to issue Alerts that extend to the neighbouring jurisdiction where:
 - i. The Village provides emergency and/or fire protection services to the neighbouring jurisdiction (e.g. through servicing or mutual aid agreements with local governments or First Nations).
 - ii. The impact of an Emergency event extends beyond the municipal boundaries of the Village and urgent notification to people in a neighbouring jurisdiction is in the public interest.
 - iii. An Alerting Authority directly requests assistance due to the complexity of their own Emergency and the authority is already established within the boundaries of the Fraser Valley Regional District (Mission, Hope, Kent/Agassiz, Abbotsford, Chilliwack).